

THE  
RECONCILER.

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AN EPISTLE  
PACIFICATORIE  
of the seeming-differences of  
opinion concerning the true-  
ness and visibility of the *Roman Church.*

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By Ios: Exon.

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ГИТ  
ЯКОМОГЛЕР

ЕСТЬ ПОСЛЕ  
ПОДАЧИЯ  
ограничения, в то же  
время имеющие  
ограничения

и ожидания



Франц  
Ф.М.Холмский  
1821

46



TO  
THE R I G H T H O-  
N O V R A B L E, A N D  
truly religious, my singular  
good Lord, Edward Earle  
of Norwich.

*My ever honored Lord:*



Confesse my  
charity led me  
into an error;  
Your Lord-  
shippe well  
knows how  
apt I am to be  
overtaken with these better de-  
ceits of an over kinde credulity. I

had thought that any dash of my pen, in a sudden, and easie advertisement, might have served to have quitted that ignorant scandal, which was cast upon my mis-taken assertion, of the true visibility of the Romane Church. The issue proves all otherwise: I finde, to my grieve, that the misunderstanding tenacie of some zealous spirits hath made it a quarrell. It cannot but trouble me to see that the position, which is so familiarly current with the best reformed Divines, & which hath beene so oft and long since published by mee without contradiction, yea, not without the approbation and applause of the whole representative body of the Clergie of this kingdome, should

now

now be quarrelled, and drawne  
into the detestation of those that  
know it not; As one therefore  
that should thinke it corrosive  
enough, that any occasion should  
be taken by ought of mine, to ra-  
vell but one thred of that seamless  
coat, I doe earnestly desire, by a  
more full explication, to give  
cleare satisfaction to all Readers;  
and by this seasonable reconcile-  
ment, to stop the flood-gates of  
contention; I know it will not be  
unpleasing to your Lordship, that  
through your honorable and pi-  
ous hands, these welcome papers  
should be transmitted to many;  
Wherein I shall first beseech, yea  
adjure al Christians, under whose  
eies they shall fall, by the dreadfull  
name of that G O D, who shall

judge

judge both the quicke, and the dead, to lay aside all unjust prejudices; and to allow the words of Truth, and Peace; I dare confidently say, Let us be understood, and we are agreed.

The searcher of all harts knows how far it was from my thoughts to speake ought in favour of the Roman Synagogue: If I have not sufficiently branded that Strūpet, I justly suffer. *Luthers* broad word is by me already both safely cōstrued, & sufficiently vindicated. But, doe you not say, It is a true visible Church? Do you not yeeld some kinde of communion with these clients of Antichrist? What is, if this be not, favour? Marke well, Christian Reader, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things:

Ob.

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things : To beginne with the latter ; No man can say but the Church of Rome holds some Truths ; those truths are Gods, and in his right, ours, why should not wee challenge our owne, wheresoever we finde it ? If a verie Devill shall say of Christ, *Thou art the Sonne of the living God*, wee will snatch this truth out of his mouth, as usurped ; and in spight of him, proclaime it for our own. Indeed, there is no communion betwixt light and darknesse, but there is communion betwixt light and light ; Now all truth is light, and therefore symbolizeth with it selfe. With that light, therefore, whose glimmering yet remaines in their darknesse, our clearer light will, and must hold

Resp.

communion; If they professe three Persons in one Godhead; two natures in one person of Christ; shall we detrect to joine with them in this Christian verite? We abhorre to have any communion with them in their errors, in their idolatrous or superstitious practices, these are their owne, not ours. If we durst have taken their part in these, this breach had not beeene; Now, who can but say that we must hate their e-  
vill, and allow their good? It is no countenance to their errours that wee embrace our owne truths; It is no disparagement to our truths, that they have blended them with their errors: Here can be no difference, then, if this communion bee not mis-taken; no

man

man will say that wee may sever  
from their common truths; No  
man will say that wee may joyne  
with them in their hatefull er-  
rors.

For the former; Hee that saith  
a theefe is truly a man, doth hee  
therein favour that theefe? He that  
saith, a diseased, dropsied, dying  
bodie, is a true (though corrupt)  
body, doth he favour that disease,  
or that living carcasse? It is no o-  
ther, no more that I say of the  
Church of Rome: Truenesse of  
being, and outward visibility, are  
no praise to her; Yea, these are ag-  
gravations to her falsehood: The  
advantage that is both sought and  
found in this assertion, is onely  
ours, as we shall see in the sequell,  
without any danger of their gain.

I say, then, that she is a true church; but, I say withall, shee is a false Church: True in existence, but false in beleefe: Let not the homonymie of a word breed jarres, where the sense is accorded: If we doe not yeeld her the true being of a Church, why do we call her the Church of Rome? What speake we of? or where is the subject of our question? who sees not that there is a morall trueness, and a naturall? He that is morally the falsest man, is, in nature, as truly a man, as the honestest; and therefore in this regard as true a man: In the same sense therefore that wee say the Devill is a true (though false) spirit, that a cheater is a true (thogh false) man, we may and must say, that the Church of

Rome

Rome is a true (though false) Church ; Certainly, there hath beene a true errore, and mistaking of the sense that is guiltie of this quarrell. As for the visibility, there can be no question : Would God, that Church did not too much fill our eie, yea the world ; There is nothing wherein it doth more pride it selfe, than in a glorious conspicuitie, scorning, in this regard, the obscure paucitie of their opposers.

But you say, What is this but to play with ambiguities ; That the Church of Rome is it selfe, that is, a Church ; that it is visible ; that it is truly existent, there can be no doubt ; but is it still a part of the truly existent, visible church of Christ ? Surely, no otherwise than

Ob.

Resp.

than an hereticall and Apostaticall Church is, and may be: Reader, whosoever thou art, for Gods sake, for thy soules sake, marke where thou treadest; Else thou shalt bee sure to fall either into an open gulfe of uncharitableness, or into a dangerous precipice of errore. There is no feare, nor favour to say, that the Church of Rome, under a Christian face, hath an Antichristian heart; overturning that foundation by necessarie inferences, which by open profession it avoweth: That face, that profession, those avowed principles are enough to give it claime to a true outward visibilitie of a Christian Church; whiles those damnable inferences are enoughe to seoffe it in the true style



of heresie, and Antichristianisme; Now, this heresie, this Antichristianisme makes Rome justly odious, and execrable to God, to Angels, and Men; but cannot utterly dischutch it, whilest those main principles maintaine a weake life in that crazie, and corrupted bodie.

But is not this language different from that whereto our eares and eies have beene inured, from the mouthes, and pens of some reverend Divines and professors of our Church? Know, Reader, that the streme of the famous Doctors, both at home, and abroad, hath runne strongly my way: I should have feared, and hated to goe alone; what reason is there then to single out one man  
B in

in a throng? Some few worthie Authors have spoken otherwise, in the warmth of their zealous contention; yet so, as that even to them durst I appeale for my Iudges; for if their sound differ from mee, their sense agrees with mee: that, which as I touched in my Advertisement, so I am now ready to make cleare by the instance of learned *Zanchius*; whose pregnant testimonies compared together, shall plainly teach us, how easie a reconcilement may bee made betwixt these two, seeming-ly-contrarie, opinions: That worthie Author, in his profession of Christian Religion, which he wrote, and published, in the 70. yeare of his age, having defined the Church of Christ in general;

and passed thorow the properties  
of it, at last, descending to the sub-  
division of the Church militant,  
comes to inquire, how particular  
Churches may be knowyne to be  
the true churches of Christ; wher-  
of he determines thus. *Illas igitur,*  
*&c.* Those Churches therefore  
doe wee acknowledg for the  
true Churches of Christ, in which  
first of all, the pure doctrine of the  
Gospell is preached, heard, admit-  
ted; and so onely admitted, that  
there is neither place, nor eare gi-  
ven to the contrarie: For both  
these are the just propertie of the  
flocke or sheepe of Christ, name-  
ly, both to heare the voice of their  
owne Pastor, and to reject the  
voice of strangers. *John 10. 4.* In  
whiche, secondly, the Sacraments

instituted by Christ, are lawfully, and (as much as may bee) according to Christ's institution, administered, and received; and therefore, in which the Sacraments deviled by men are not admitted, and allowed; In which lastly, the discipline of Christ hath the due place; that is, where both publicly, and privately, charitable care is had, both by admonitions, corrections, and at last (if need be) by excommunications, that the Commandments of God be duly kept, and that all persons live soberly, justly, and piously, to the glorie of God, and edification of their Neighbour. Thus hee, wherewithal who sees not how directly he aims, both at the justifying of our Churches, and the

casheering of the Roman, which  
 is palpably guiltie of the violation  
 of these wholesome rules? and in-  
 deed, it must needs be said, if we  
 bring the Roman Church to this  
 touch, she is cast for a meer coun-  
 terfeit; shee is as farre from truth,  
 as truth is from falsehood: Now  
 by this time you goe away with  
 an opinion that learned Zanchie  
 is my professed adversarie, and  
 hath directly condemned my po-  
 sition, of the trienesse, and visibi-  
 litie of the Roman Church: Haye  
 but patience, I beseech you, to read  
 what the same excellent Author  
 writes, in his golden Preface to  
 that noble worke, *De natura Dei*;  
 where this question is clearly, and  
 punctually decided: There you  
 shall finde, that having passed  
 bonyoij

through the wofull and gloomic  
obfuscations of the Church of  
God, in all former ages, he, descend-  
ing to the darknesse of the pre-  
sent Babylon, concludes thus :  
*Deinde non potuit Satan, &c.* More-  
over, Satan could not, in the verie  
Roman Church, doe what he li-  
sted; as hee had done in the Ea-  
sterne ; to bring all things to such  
passee, as that it shoule no more  
have the forme of a Christian  
Church; For, in spight of Satan,  
that Church retained still the chief  
foundacions of the faith, although  
weakned with the doctrines of  
men; it retained the publique pre-  
aching of the word of God, thogh  
in many places mis-understood,  
and mis-construed; the invocati-  
on of the name of Christ, thogh  
aguoins joyned

joyned also with the invocations  
of dead men ; the administration  
of Baptisme, instituted by Christ  
himselfe, howsoever defiled with  
the addition of many superstitions.  
So as, together with the sym-  
bole of the covenant, the Cove-  
nant it selfe remained still in her ;  
I mean in all the Churches of the  
West, no otherwise than it did in  
the Church of Israel, even after  
that all things were in part profa-  
ned by *Ieroboam*, and other impi-  
ous, and idolatrous Kings, upon  
the defection made by them from  
the Church, and Tribe of  *Juda* ;  
For, neither doe I assent to them  
which would have the Church  
of Rome to have no lesse ceased  
to be the Church of Christ, than  
those Easterne Churches, which

afterwards turned Mahumetan; what Church was ever more corrupt than the Church of the ten Tribes, yet we learne from the Scriptures, that it was still the Church of God? And how doth Saint Paul call that Church, wherein Antichrist (hee saith) shall sit, the Temple of God? neither is it any Baptisme at all, that is administered out of the Church of Christ. The wife that is an Adulteresse, doth not cease to be a wife, unless being despoiled of her mariage ring, she be manifestly divorced. The Church of Rome, therefore, is yet the Church of Christ, but what manner of Church? Surely so corrupted and depraved, and with so great tyranny oppressed, that you can neither with a good

conscience, partake with them, in  
their holy things, nor safely dwelle  
amongst them. Thus he againe,  
wherein you see hee speakes as  
home for me, as I could devise to  
speake for my selfe, and as appo-  
sitley professeth to oppose the  
contrarie.

Looke now, how this learned  
Author may be reconciled to his  
owne pen; and by theverie same  
way, shall my pen bee reconciled  
with others: Either he agrees not  
with himselfe, or else, in his sense,  
I agree with my gainsayers: No  
thing is more plaine, then that he  
in that former speech, and all no  
ther clastick Authors, that speake  
in that keye meanes by her true  
Churche, a sound, pure, right beleef  
ying Churche; so as their presu-

vid. pre-  
al. de nat.  
sci.

rather verax? Zanchie explices the termic, whiles he joines *veram* & *puram* together; so as in this construction, it is no true Church that is an unsound one; as if truth of existence were all one with truth of doctrine: In this sense, whosoever shall say the Church of Rome is a true Church, I say he calls evill good, and is no better than a teacher of lies. But, if we measure the true being of a visible Church, by the direct maintenance of fundamentall principles, though by consequences indirectly overturned, and by the possession of the word of God, and his Sacraments, though not without fōble adulteration; what judicious Christian can but, with mee, subscribe to learned Zanchius, that

the Chutch of Rome hath yet the  
 true visibilitie of a Church of  
 Christ : what should I need to  
 press the latitude, and multiplicity  
 of sense of the word, *Church* ;  
 there is no one term that I know,  
 in all use of speech, so various ; If,  
 in a large sense, it be taken to com-  
 prehend the society of all that pro-  
 fesse Christian Religion, throughout  
 the whole world, howsoever im-  
 pured, who can denie this title to  
 the Roman ? If, in a strict sense, it  
 be taken (as it is by *Zanchius* here,  
 and all those Divines who refuse  
 to give this style to the Synagogue  
 of Rome) for the companie of e-  
 lect faithfull men gathered into  
 one my selfe bodie under one  
 head, *Christ*, washed by his blood,  
 justified by his metits, sanctified  
 by

by his Spirit, conſionable waiting upon the true ordinances of God, in his pure Word, and holiſ Sacramēts, who can be ſo shameleſſe, as to give this title to the Roman Church? Both these ſentences, then, are equally true; *The Church of Rome is yet a true Church, in the first ſense;* *The Church of Rome long ſince ceaſed to bee a true Church in the ſecond.* As thoſe friendly ſoldiers therefore, of old, ſaid to their fellowes ( θυμαχουσι;) why fight wiſt Stay, stay, deare brethren, for Gods ſake, for his Churches ſake, for your ſoules ſake, stay, theſe buſie and unprofitable litigations; riſing up on both ſides, your angric peopls Turne your Swords into ſievers to cut downe the imprefcions of the Roman church;

and your Speares into Mattockes,  
to beat downe the walls of this  
mysticall Babylon; There are ene-  
mies enow abroad, Let us bee  
friends at home ; But if our sense  
be the same, you will aske, why  
our termes varie, and why wee  
have chosen to fall upon that ma-  
ner of expression, which gives ad-  
vantage to the Adversarie, offence  
to our owne ? Christian Reader,  
let me beseech thee, in the bowels  
of Christ, to weigh well this mat-  
ter, and then tell me why such of-  
fence, such advantage should bee  
rather given by my words, than  
by the same words, in the mouth  
of Luther, of Calvin, of Zanchie, La-  
ninus, Plessee, Hooker, Andrewes,  
Field, Crakenthorpe, Bedel, and that  
whole cloud of learned and pi-  
ous

ous Authors, who have, without exception, used the same language? And why more by my words, now, than twentie yeares agoe, at which time I published the same truth, in a more ful and liberall expression. VVise and charitable Christians may not be apt to take offence where none is given. As for anie advantage that is hereby given to the Adversaries, they may put it in their eye, and see never the worse. Loe, say they, we are of the true visible Church; this is enough for us; why are we forsaken, why are we persecuted, why are we solicited to a change? Alas, poore soules, doe they not know, that Hypocrites, leuid persons, reprobates, are no lesse members of the true visible Church?

what gaine they by this but a deeper damnation ? To what purpose did the Iewes crie, *The Temple of the Lord*, whiles they despighed the Lord of that Temple ? Is the sea-weed ever the lesse vile, because it is dragd up together with good fish ? They are of the visible Church, such as it is ; what is this but to say, they are neither Iewes, nor Turkes, nor Pagans, but misbelievers, damnable hereticall in opinion, shamefullie idolatrous in practice ; Let them make their best of this just Elogie ; and triumph in this style ; may we never prosper if we envie them this glorie : Our care shall be, that, besides the Church sensible, (as Zuinglius distinguisheth) we may be of the Church spirituall ; and not resting in

Epist. 2.  
resp. ad Ca-  
tabaptiz.

in a fruitlesse visibilitie, wee may  
 finde our selves livelie limbis of  
 the mystical body of Christ; which  
 oblie condition shall give us a  
 true right to heaven ; whiles fa-  
 shionable profession, in vain cries,  
*Lord, Lord,* and is barred out of  
 those blessed gates, with an, *I know  
 you not.*

Neither may the Reader think,  
 that I affect to goe by waies of  
 speech : no, I had not taken this  
 path, unlesse I had found it both  
 more beaten, and fairer : I am not  
 so unwise, to teach the Adversarie  
 what disadvantage I conceive to  
 be given to our most just cause, by  
 the other manner of explication.  
 Let it suffice to say, that this form  
 of defence more fully stops the ad-  
 versaries mouth in those two  
 maine

(87)

maine, and various scandals  
which bee cast upon our holy  
Religion, Defection from the  
Church, and Innovation wherein  
which, no suggestion hath wone  
to bee more prevalent with  
weake, and ungrounded hearts,  
what woe further win by chie  
not more charitable, than I say  
Tenet, I had rather it shoulde be  
silently conceived by the judi-  
cious, then blazoned by my  
free penne; shortly, in this state  
of the question, our gaist is as  
cleare, as the Adversaries lesse:  
our ancient Truth triumphed  
over their upstart errors, how  
charitie over their mercilless pre-  
sumptions; Feare not therefore  
dear brethren, where there is

no roome for danger ; Suspect  
 not fraud where there is no  
 thing but plaine, honest, sim-  
 plicite of intentions ; censure  
 not where there is the same  
 Truth, clad in a different, but  
 more easie habite of words ;  
 But if any mans fervent zeale  
 shall rather draw him to the li-  
 king of that other, rougher, and  
 harder way, so as in the meane  
 time he keepe within the bounds  
 of Christian charitie, I taxe him  
 not ; let ev'ry man abound in  
 his owne sense ; Only let our  
 hearts, and tongues, and hands,  
 conspire together in peace with  
 our selves, in warre with our  
 common enemies.

Thus sait have I (Right Ho-  
 nou-

nourable) in a desire of peace, poured out my selfe into a plaine explication, and easie accordance: Those whom I strive to satisfie, are onely mistakers; whose censures, if some man would have either laught out, or despised; yet I have condescended to take off by a serious depreciation, and just defence.

It is an unreasonable motion to request mindes prepossessed with prejudice to heare reason; Whole Volumes are nothing to such as have contented themselves onely to take up opinions upon trust, and will hold them, because they know where they had them: In vaine should I spend my selfe in beating up-

on such anviles ; but for those ingenuous Christians , which will hold an eare open for justice , and truth , I have said enoughe , if ought at all needed .

Alas , my Lord , I see and grieve to see it ; It is my Rochet that hath offended , and not I ; In another habit , I , long since , published this , and more , without dislike ; It is this colour of innocence that hath bleared some over-tender eyes ; Wherein I know not whether I should more pittie their errour , or applaud my owne sufferings ; although I may not say with the Psalmist , *What hath the righteous done ?* Let mee ( I beseech your Lordship ) upon this occasion , have

have leave to give a little vent to  
my just griefe in this point.

The other day I fell upon a Latine Pamphlet, homely for style, tedious for length, zealously uncharitable for stiffe, wherein the Author (onely wile in this, that hee would bee unknownne) in a grave fierceness flies in the face of our English Prelacie; not so much inveighing against their persons, (which hee could bee content to reverence) as their verie places. I blest my selfe to see the case so altered: Heretofore, the Person had wont to bcare off matthe blowes from the function, now the verie function wounds the person: In what case are wee,

when that which should command respect, brands us? What blacke Art hath raised up this spirit of *Ærius* from his pit? Who is me, that zeale should breed such monsters of conceit? It is the honour, the pompe, the wealth, the pleasure (hee saith) of the Episcopall Chaire that is guiltye of the depravation of our Calling; and if himselfe were so overlayd with greatnessse, he should suspect his owne fidelite. Alas, poore man, at what distance doth hee see us? Fogie Ayre useth to represent evill object farre bigger than is. Our SAVIOUR in his temptation upon the Mount, had only the glorie of those Kingdome

donnes shewed to him, by that  
subtile Spirit, nor the cares, and  
vexations ; Right so are our dig-  
nities exhibited to these cacious  
beholders ; Little doe these men  
see the toyles, and anxieties that  
attend this supposedly-pleasing  
eminence.

All the revenge that I would  
wish to this uncharitable Cen-  
surer, should bee this, that he  
might bee but for a while ad-  
judged to this so glorious seate  
of mine ; that so his experience  
might taste the bewitching plea-  
sures of this envied greatness ;  
he should well finde more dan-  
ger in being over-spent with  
worke, than of languishing with  
ease and delicacie.

For mee I need not appeale  
to Heaven: Eyes enow can wit-  
nesse how few free houres I  
have enjoyed, since I put on these  
Robes of sacred honour. In so  
much as I could finde in my  
heart, with holy Gregorie, to  
complaine of my change; were  
it not, that I see these publique  
troubles are so many acceptable  
services to my G O D, whose  
glorie is the end of my being.  
Certainly, my Lord, if none but  
earthly respects should sway me,  
I shoud heartily wish to change  
this Pallace (which the Provi-  
dence of G O D, and the Boun-  
tay of my gracious Sovereaigne  
hath put mee into) for my qui-  
et Cell at Walsbath, where I had

so sweet leasure to enjoy God,  
your Lordship, and my selfe :  
But I have followed the calling  
of my G O D, to whose service  
I am willingly sacrificed ; and  
must now, in an holy obedi-  
ence to his Divine Majestie ,  
with what cheerfulnesse I may ,  
ride out all the stormes of en-  
vie, which unavoidably will a-  
light upon the least appearance  
of a conceived greatness ; in the  
meane time , what ever I may  
seeme to others, I was never less  
in my owne apprehensions ; and ,  
werelit not for this attendance  
of envie , could not yeeld my  
selfe any whit greater than I was ;  
what ever I am , that good God  
of mine, make mee faithfull to  
him ;

him; and compose the unquiet  
 spirits of men, to aconscionable  
 end of the publique peace; with  
 which prayer, together with the  
 approbation of all happiness to  
 your Lordship, and all yours, I  
 take leave and am  
 voted in all heart  
 I. S. Exm.

